

## ABOUT THE SECOND DISTRICT

### The Second Congressional District

is comprised of some of the most diverse neighborhoods in the United States. The district, which includes parts of Philadelphia and Cheltenham Township, is home to some of America's oldest dwellings and resources.

### In and Around Cheltenham Township

In an effort to better understand the needs of the Cheltenham community, Congressman Fattah

has met with numerous community groups and visited several local schools. Several events are particularly memorable to Congressman Fattah, including his visit with seniors at the Cedarbrook Hill Apartments where they engaged in a spirited discussion on Social Security, Medicare and the new prescription drug plan. The Congressman had the opportunity to meet with the President of the Pennsylvania College of Optometry and The Eye Institute to discuss

development of the facility. Students at the Cedarbrook Middle School were challenged by Congressman Fattah to study well, read often and stay in school. At Cheltenham High School, the Congressman spoke to the senior class on economics. Congressman Fattah also spoke at the Beth Shalom Synagogue, the Rabbinical College and with members of the Wyncote Civic Association. 🏠

*Please visit our website to find the Second District map and zip codes.*

## INFORMATION

### White House Tours

Currently, group tours of the White House are scheduled Tuesday through Saturday for parties of 10 or more. To schedule a tour, fax a letter with the group size, along with the name and phone number of the group leader to 215.387.6407.

### Flag Request

Individuals wishing to have flags flown over the U.S. Capitol as a mark of dedication should call 215.387.6404. A nominal fee is charged for each flag.

### U.S. Capitol Tours

The U.S. Capitol is open to the public for guided tours only. Tours are conducted from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Visitors may obtain free tickets for tours on a first-come, first-served basis, at the Capitol Guide Service Desk. The maximum party size is 40 people. Also, please specify whether passes to the House Gallery will be needed when calling. A stamped pass is required to visit the House Gallery.

### U.S. Mint - Philadelphia

Students and youth groups, kindergarten through 12th grade, as well as organized groups of military personnel and veterans, are able to schedule tours of the United States Mint's Philadelphia location. Call the Mint at 215.408.0112 for more information.

*For additional information on tours or flags please visit our website: [www.house.gov/fattah](http://www.house.gov/fattah)*

### District Offices

4104 Walnut Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19104  
215.387.6404 | 215.387.6407 fax

6632 Germantown Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19119  
215.848.9386 | 215.848.9060  
215.848.3884 fax

### Washington Office

2301 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
202.225.4001 | 202.225.5392 fax

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Official Business

*Chaka Fattah*

MC  
ECRWSS  
PRESRT STD

### Postal Customer

Second Congressional District  
Pennsylvania

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# 2004 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



A REPORT FROM CONGRESSMAN CHAKA FATTAH

### Dear Neighbor:

As we embark on a new year and a new Congress, our country continues to face domestic and international challenges. The war in Iraq, which I continue to oppose, remains unabated with U.S. troops suffering significant casualties due to a lack of proper armor. The ongoing genocide in Sudan has claimed the lives of tens of thousands, while millions of displaced refugees endure famine and disease. The need for a lasting peace in the Middle East remains a major concern.

Domestically, serious budgetary challenges await the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress. The country has moved from a \$236 billion budget surplus to an incredible \$413 billion deficit, which is the highest in the nation's history. The debt ceiling limit has increased to \$7 trillion and the trade deficit has swelled to a record \$56 billion. Healthcare still eludes 45 million Americans, while quality jobs and affordable housing remains only a dream for millions more.

Despite these numerous challenges, local and state officials in Pennsylvania deserve praise for their tireless efforts to improve the quality of life for the citizens of the district. Governor Ed Rendell is to be congratulated for his leadership in providing millions of Pennsylvanians with a reduction in their wage and property taxes. Mayor John Street and Philadelphia Public Schools CEO, Paul Vallas, also deserve congratulations for working with me to provide every Philadelphia graduating senior the opportunity to pursue a college education. The newly established College Opportunity Resources for Education (CORE) program, the first of its kind in the country, provides need-based scholarships to Philadelphia high school seniors who plan on attending one of 19 state supported colleges and universities. GEAR UP, a program designed to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to successfully pursue a college education, continues to experience great success with well over two million students realizing their college dreams.

As your Representative, know that I am interested in your concerns. I will continue to work hard to implement measures that are of critical importance to our nation, our state, and our district. I hope you will find the information contained in this newsletter to be of value to you. I encourage you to contact me and my staff to help make your federal government work best for you.

Very truly yours,

*Chaka Fattah*



## INFORMATION

### Committee Assignments

Congressman Fattah serves on the Appropriations committee. This committee oversees \$800 billion in discretionary spending annually. As a member of this committee, Fattah serves on the Subcommittee on VA-HUD & Independent Agencies, and is the ranking member on the Subcommittee on the District of Columbia. Fattah is the youngest of the thirteen ranking Democrats currently serving on any of the Appropriations subcommittees.

### Legislation Introduced

#### In the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress (2003-2004)

H.R. 236	The Student Bill of Rights
H.R. 1357	Homeowners' Emergency Mortgage Assistance Act
H.R. 3759	Transform America Transaction Fee
H.R. 3988	Gear Up and Go Act

### Signing up

To sign up for the latest news and information from Congressman Fattah visit our website: [www.house.gov/fattah](http://www.house.gov/fattah)



## LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR THE 109<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS (2005-2006)

### “The Student Bill of Rights”

This measure is Congressman Fattah’s legislative priority. It seeks to hold states accountable for providing adequate resources in seven key areas, including up-to-date textbooks, school facilities and computers. In the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress, The “Student Bill of Rights” earned the support and co-sponsorship of over 200 members of the House and Senate. As states continue to adjust to the requirements of the “No Child Left Behind Act,” Congressman Fattah will re-introduce the “Student Bill of Rights” and work for its passage to ensure each student has the necessary resources to learn.

### “Transform America Transaction Fee”

This bill would require the U.S. Department of the Treasury to conduct an in-depth study into simplifying the U.S. federal tax code. Specifically, the measure asks Treasury to examine the impact of abolishing the Internal Revenue Service and current federal income tax system, and replacing it with a system of transaction fees on credit, debit, check, and certain cash transactions. Congressman Fattah will be introducing this legislation again in the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress with the hope that legislators will take a serious approach to the issue of tax reform that is not only fair, but simple and efficient.

### “Homeowners’ Emergency Mortgage Assistance Act” (HEMA)

This legislation seeks to assist homeowners experiencing temporary, unavoidable difficulty making payments on their home mortgages. These hardships, not to exceed a total of three years, can include: loss of job, reduction of earnings, injury or illness of a member of the household, divorce or separation leading to fiscal hardship, and death of a member of the household. Repayment of the assistance loan will occur once the financial circumstances of the homeowner improve, at a rate including interest, to the U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development. HEMA earned the co-sponsorship of over 30 members of the House of Representatives and will be re-introduced in the 109th Congress.

### “GEAR UP and GO Act”

This measure improves upon Congressman Fattah’s most noteworthy bill, GEAR UP, which was signed into law in 1998. GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) is a program that provides resources to ensure that students can easily make the transition from high school into post-secondary education. As Congress continues to work towards reauthorizing higher education programs, Congressman Fattah will introduce legislation that continues to strengthen and enhance this nationally recognized program. 🏠

## EDUCATION INITIATIVES

Congressman Fattah is known for his tireless efforts to provide all children with an equal opportunity to receive the best education possible. He is the architect of GEAR UP and CORE Philly, two innovative education programs designed to provide students with the necessary resources to fulfill their dreams of going to college.

### GEAR UP

GEAR UP, Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs, is Representative Fattah’s most significant legislative accomplishment since coming to Congress. GEAR UP is a \$1.8 billion creative education initiative designed to nurture public-private education partnerships that enlists the involvement of parents, teachers, guidance counselors, school administrators, community groups, businesses, and places of worship. GEAR UP was appropriated \$309 million for fiscal year 2005, 3.7% above the amount appropriated in fiscal year 2004. This money is sufficient to provide for a new grant competition during early 2005, and will provide original 1999 grantees with the option to apply for new grants. GEAR UP is a thriving education initiative with over 300 state and local partnerships in 47 states, the District of Columbia, and three territories, and provides nearly two million low-income students the essential tools necessary to achieve in college.

In 2002, the Pennsylvania State GEAR UP Project was created through a \$12.4 million five-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education. This grant provides over 14,000 students in the Philadelphia and Harrisburg School Districts with support services that will help prepare students for college.

Locally, the School District of Philadelphia’s total six-year funding for GEAR UP stands at more than \$35 million. This funding will help serve over 17,000 additional students. Arcadia University, will also receive \$870,000 in six-year funding that will help to serve over 700 students.

### College Opportunity Resources for Education (CORE)

Congressman Fattah spearheaded the effort to create the nation’s first citywide last dollar scholarship program, the College Opportunity Resources for Education (CORE Philly). The Congressman, in partnership with Mayor John F. Street and Mr. Paul Vallas, CEO of the Philadelphia Public Schools, established CORE Philly to provide need-based scholarships to any high school senior who resides in Philadelphia and attends one of the 19 state supported colleges and universities. Eligible students receive up to \$3,000 for their first year of college. In the first year of this program 1,977 students were awarded \$5 million in scholarship monies. Those receiving scholarships include 22% who graduated from private and parochial schools, 78% who graduated from public and charter schools, and 38% first generation college-goers. Expansion of the program is being considered. For more information on CORE Philly visit Congressman Fattah’s website: [www.house.gov/fattah](http://www.house.gov/fattah). 🏠



Congressman Fattah met with Congressman Ruben Hinojosa and Steven Drummond, Education and Welfare Editor, National Public Radio and scholars from the GEAR UP 2004 Youth Leadership Summit.



Congressman Fattah and Mayor Street with CORE Philly recipients.

Learning can be fun.

Visit the following websites designed to help children understand how the federal government works.

- <http://www.kids.gov>
- <http://bensguide.gpo.gov>
- <http://www.whitehouse.gov/kids>
- <http://www.usda.gov/news/usdakids/index.html>
- <http://www.nasa.gov/kids.html>
- <http://www.ustreas.gov/kids>
- <http://www.americaslibrary.gov/cgi-bin/page.cgi>